

Location: Borough Council Chambers, Borough Hall

Members Present: Lisbeth Haines, M.D. (presiding); Susan Fisher, V.M.D.; Mary Germain, Ed.D., APRN-BC; Beverly Poelstra, M.D.; Margaret Querec, M.S.N., R.N.

Present: Stephen Papenberg, Health Officer.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 4:34 p.m. by Dr. Haines, prior notification having been given in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231.

Review of Minutes:

The minutes of the RHBOH meeting held on November 11, 2008 were reviewed. Professional credentials for Dr. Beverly Poelstra will be corrected to read M.D. Unanimous approval of the minutes as corrected.

Report of the Health Officer:

Update on Departments of Health Consolidation: Mr. Papenberg reported that South Brunswick Township has received a proposal from Middlesex County for the provision of public health services to the Township. The proposal is currently under review; the Township has made a counter proposal and is in negotiation with the County. The anticipated date for a final decision is April 1, 2009. The major issue is cost; is the cost differential significant enough to warrant a change to the County for the provision of public health services?

Dr. Poelstra asked if Rocky Hill's contract with the Township of South Brunswick for the provision of public health services was a significant factor in the decision-making. Mr. Papenberg indicated that the monies involved were not a major factor influencing the decision-making process.

Dr. Haines reported on the response that she had received from a Letter of Inquiry that she had sent to Mr. John Horensky, Health Director of the Somerset County Health Department. Mr. Horensky indicated that he would be glad to provide a proposal for the provision of public health services by the County to Rocky Hill. In order to do so, he requested more information – e.g. the level of engagement that would be expected of his staff – i.e. attendance at BOH meetings; staff support for clinics such as Flu and Rabies...; the number and types of food establishments in the Borough; environmental health issues; number of active attendees at Child Health Clinics; how the Borough has previously contracted for the provision of public health services...

Dr. Fisher asked if the Health Officer is required to attend all BOH meetings? Mr. Papenberg said no; that out of 111 Boards of Health, there is usually a 50/50 split between provision of public health services by their respective counties, and the BOH(s) being served by their own health officers. Mr. Papenberg indicated that in Boards with County coverage, the County Health Officer usually only attends BOH meetings if a specific request is made for him/her or their designee to attend. The person who usually represents the County at local BOH meetings is one of the county's Environmental Health Specialists.

Mr. Papenberg noted that even though Rocky Hill has minimal need for Child Health Services, the Borough cannot cease to offer these services. The solution would be to contact the Somerset

County Health Department and refer the family to the nearest clinic offering Child Health Services. The same would apply to the Flu/Pneumonia Vaccine and Rabies Clinics currently offered by the Borough.

Mr. Papenberg discussed his participation in an ongoing study at the county level in New Jersey, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, that is examining a potential model for a single health department to effectively and efficiently provide public health services for the entire county. He met with the Business Force person who represents the group that is developing and implementing the study and recommended that the representative review a similar study carried out in Somerset County 5-6 years ago. Mr. Papenberg also reported that he was successful in getting the representative to make significant modifications in the study, noting that it is critical to examine the formal and informal mechanisms for promoting sharing of expertise and effective use of services between Departments of Health as well as determining the role that Somerset Medical Center would fulfill if this model of service provision is adopted.

Animal Control Contract: In the context of discussing options for the future provision of public health services to the Borough, Mr. Papenberg noted that the Animal Control Contract, which is separate from the contract for the provision of public health services, needs to be up-dated. He will bring a copy to the next Board meeting. He noted that South Brunswick Township, with which the Borough has a current contract for animal control, sub-contracts with Montgomery Township and shares the services of their Animal Control Officer. If the Borough opts to have Somerset County become the provider of public health services, a new provider of animal control services will need to be identified. Dr. Haines will speak to Mayor Zimmerman and see if there is interest in approaching Montgomery Township re: the provision of such services.

PODs: Mr. Papenberg reported that the Somerset County Health Department dropped off the Borough's Point of Distribution (POD) materials. These materials are to be used if there is a need to set up a central site for the distribution of medications in the event of a biological attack/outbreak. The size of the PODs approximates two large desks. They are not temperature sensitive and are being stored at the Montgomery High School.

Report on the Municipal Alliance (M.A.):

Mr. Papenberg reported that a new report has been issued, evaluating the effectiveness of the Municipal Alliances Program. The Report represents a statewide audit of 567 municipalities. Despite the large number of municipalities involved in the audit, the Report chose to highlight three deficiencies, rather than balancing the criticism with a discussion of the positive outcomes that have been generated by the Program.

Dr. Poelstra, the Board's representative to the M.A., reported that Mayor Zimmerman will issue a proclamation in support of the Municipal Alliance's designation of March 3, 2009 as Family Night Out.

She reported that the Municipal Alliance meeting on November 10, 2008 did not have enough members in attendance to achieve a quorum. At the meeting held on December 8, 2008, Mr. Pruitt, Chair of the Municipal Alliance, announced that the Alliance will be divided into two separate boards – an advisory board and a decision-making board. In order to be named as a member of the decision-making (voting) board, a member must commit to attending a minimum of 10/12 meetings/year. Examples of decisions that are made include distribution of monies to various program initiatives; selection and distribution of educational materials; transportation of senior citizens for medical care... The Alliance meets the third Monday evening of every month. Brian Griner, representative of the Borough Council to the Municipal Alliance, has resigned.

Old-Business: Pre-School Sandbox Cover:

Drs. Haines and Fisher met with the staff and parents. The meeting was very cordial. The Board of Health has purchased two, laminated signs that inform users of the hazards of contaminated sandboxes and urge the replacement of the sandbox cover when it is not in use. The staff of the nursery school indicated that they would place the signs in conspicuous locations by the sandbox. Drs. Haines and Fisher also shared information about the website that has Do-It-Yourself (DIY) plans for building an inexpensive, retractable sandbox cover.

Meeting Schedule for 2009:

Dr. Haines asked if the current meeting schedule – the second Tuesday of each month (except July & August) from 4:30-6p.m. was convenient for all members. There was general agreement that it was; that it was good to have a stable date and time for the meetings. The schedule will remain as is and Dr. Haines will so notify Donna Griffiths (Borough Clerk).

New Business: Membership in the National Association of Local Boards of Health (NALBOH):

Dr. Haines queried the members of the Board regarding the desirability of continuing the Board's membership in NALBOH. Mr. Papenberg recommended that if the cost of dues was an issue, that preference should be given to membership in the NJ Association of Local Boards of Health. Dr. Haines indicated that cost was not an issue. Ms. Querec moved, seconded by Dr. Poelstra, that the Board continue its membership in both the local and national organizations. The motion was confirmed unanimously.

Board of Health 2008 Initiatives:**Communication:**

The BOH website, created and maintained by Dr. Fisher, is averaging about 20 hits/day. Dr. Haines reported that the Mary Jacobs Library has no link to the BOH website. Drs. Haines and Fisher will check with the library staff to see how an icon can be placed on their computer systems to provide a direct link to the website.

Dr. Poelstra reported that the links to "Guns and Suicide" and "Guns & Kids" did not open when she tried to access them via the website a few days ago. Dr. Fisher indicated that she would check the links.

Radon:

Dr. Germain distributed a two page Fact Sheet on radon and its health effects produced by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry of the USDHHS, PHS in September of 2008. Dr. Fisher will place the link to the Fact Sheet on the BOH website. Kits for testing for the presence of radon in one's home are available from the South Brunswick Township Health Department at a cost of \$20.00. Dr. Haines will speak with the Borough Clerk and see if she is willing to keep a small supply for purchase at the Borough Hall.

Catch & Trap:

The BOH purchased several traps to catch feral cats. Dr. Haines will check on the usage of same and report to the Board at the next meeting.

Head Lice:

Dr. Poelstra reported that Gabrielle Dietrich will develop a Fact Sheet for inclusion in the Borough newsletter &/or placement on the BOH website.

Prevention of Pedestrian Accidents:

Dr. Haines indicated that a representative of the N.J. State Police has said that they will provide some cumulative data to the Borough re: pedestrian accidents. Dr. Fisher noted that Pennington has its own police force and that all traffic seems to slow to 25 mph immediately upon reaching the Pennington town line. There is apparently a strong police presence and enforcement of speed limits in Pennington.

Dr. Haines distributed two pages of data on Pedestrian Safety Notes, in which the relationships between vehicular speed, traffic volume and the incidence and severity of pedestrian injuries was analyzed. The data show that limiting roadways to two lanes and low speed limits are associated with a decrease in accidents to pedestrians. It was also noted that Rocky Hill does not meet the criteria for installing a traffic control signal.

Dr. Haines noted the apparent effectiveness of the user activated pedestrian safety device located at Harrison Street in Princeton. It has embedded blinking lights in the crosswalk. Ms. Querec indicated that the area around the towpath by the canal is a major area of concern secondary to the volume of recreational users and the proximity of the four-way road junction. There was general agreement that the towpath area is a potential high-risk area for pedestrian accidents. Questions were raised about whether or not the South Bound Brook Police Department, with which the Borough contracts for selected police services, was aggressively policing for speeding violations. Dr. Haines assured the members that the data indicates that they do issue a significant number of tickets for moving violations to both cars & trucks.

Mr. Papenberg suggested that the Borough might consider asking the SBBPD to station plain clothes police officers and vehicles at high risk pedestrian crossings.

There was general discussion of the number and severity of pedestrian accidents during the past several years. Ms. Querec, a long-standing member of the Rocky Hill First Aid and Rescue Squad, identified at least five major pedestrian accidents within the past several years. She also suggested that Susan Bristol, previous Chair of the Borough's Planning Committee, might have some valuable information about traffic and pedestrian safety.

Pet Licensing:

Dr Haines reported that the Borough Council wishes to retain annual licensing of cats and dogs.

Adjournment:

Dr. Haines adjourned the meeting at 6:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Germain